

أمهات النبي

Mothers of the Prophet

ﷺ و ﷺ



Yawm-e-Hazrat ʿĀminah

ﷺ

brief notes for a bayān given by:
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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ


وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا ۖ إِنَّمَا يُبَلِّغُنَا عَنْكَ الْكِبَرُ أَحَدُهُمَا
أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقْتُلْ لَهُمَا أَوْلَادَهُمَا ۖ وَلَا تَهْتِكْ لَهُمَا أَسْمَاءَ آبَائِهِمَا وَلَا تَهْتِكْ لَهُمَا
جَنَاحَ الذَّلِيلِ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيرًا

wa qaḍā rabbuka ʿallā taʿbudū ʿillā ʿiyyāhu
wa bi-l-wālidayni ʾiḥsānan ʾimmā yablughanna ʿindaka -l-kibara
ʾahaduhumā ʾaw kilāhumā falā taqul lahumā ʾawffin
wa lā tanharhumā wa qul lahumā qawlan karīmā
wa ʾakhfiḍ lahumā janāḥa-dh-dhulli mina-r-raḥmati
wa qul rabbi ʾirḥamhumā kamā rabbayānī sagḥirā

Your Lord has decreed that
you should worship none but Him,
and that you should show kindness to your parents. Whether one or
both of them reach old age with you,
do not say ‘Ugh!’ to them out of irritation
and do not be harsh with them
but speak to them with gentleness and generosity.
Lower the wing of humility to them, out of compassion, and say,
‘My Lord! Have mercy on them,
just as they reared me when I was [a] small [child].
(Sūratu-l-ʾIsra 17:23-24)



[Cover Photo]

The remains of the grave of ʿĀminah bint Wahb (أمينة بنت وهب) 
destroyed by the Saʿudis who bulldozed it in 1988 and burnt it with gasoline.



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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
وَوَضَّيْنَا لِلْإِنْسَانِ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حَمْلَهُ أُمًّا وَهَنَا عَلَى وَهْنٍ وَفَضَّلْنَا فِي عَامَيْنِ أَنْ أَشْكُنَ
لِي وَلَوْ الدَّبْكُ إِلَيَّ الْمَصِيرُ

wa waṣṣayna-l-°insāna bi-wālidayhi ḥamalat-hu °ummuhu wahnna
°alā wahnin wa fiṣāluhu fi °āmayni °ani °uṣḥkur lī waliwālidayka
°ilayya-l-maṣīr

We have instructed the human concerning his parents.

Bearing him caused his mother hardship upon hardship

and the period of his weaning was two years:

‘Give thanks to Me and to your parents. I am your final destination.’

(Surātu-l-Luqmān 31:14)



Abu Hurairah ؓ reported that a person came to the Prophet ﷺ and asked: “Who among people is the most deserving of my best treatment?” He ؓ replied: “Your mother.” He then asked, “Who next?” The Prophet ﷺ replied: “Your mother.” He asked again: “Who next?” He ؓ said again, “Your mother.” He again asked, “Then who?” He ؓ said: “Your father.” [Ṣaḥīḥ Bukharī]



°Āminah bint Wahb; (أمنة بنت وهب) ؓ (died 577 ce/-46bh) was the mother of the the Prophet ﷺ. °Āminah was born to Wahb ibn °Abd Manaf and Barrah bint °Abd al °Uzzā ibn °Uṭhmān ibn °Abd al-Dār in Makkah. She was a member of the Banu Zuhrah clan in the tribe of Quraysh who claimed descent from °Ibrahīm ؑ through his son °Ismā’il ؑ. Her ancestor Zuhrah was the elder brother of Qusayy ibn Kilab, who was also an ancestor of °Abd Allāh ibn °Abd al Muṭṭalib. Qusayy ibn Kilāb became the first Quraysh custodian of the Ka°bah (الكعبة). °Abdu-l-Muṭṭalib (عبد المطلب) negotiated the marriage of his youngest son °Abd Allāh ؓ with °Āminah whom he eventually married.

Some readers/listeners may question my adding blessings on the parents of the Prophet ﷺ, to which I reply that, according to °Imām as-Suyutī, “after their death, Allāh ؓ granted life again to the parents of the Prophet ﷺ on his request and both declared faith in him.” Then °Imām Suyutī continued, saying, “Allāh ؓ is not powerless to do this for His Rasūl ﷺ. He can do whatever He pleases.” A great many scholars, especially Ibn Taymiyyah and his followers, dismiss evidence for what °Imām Suyutī says as being based on °aḥādīth that are weak (*da°if* /ضعيف) or fabricated (*mawḍū°* /موضوع).

However the majority of Ahlus-Sunnah wal Jama'a claim that the parents of the Prophet ﷺ were saved and are in Jannah, 'in shā' Allāh. 'Imām as-Suyutī (above) authored four books arguing that the parents of the Prophet ﷺ were saved and were NOT going to hell:

1) *at-Ta'athīm wa-l-Minna fī anna Abawayu-r-asuli fī-j-Jannah*

2) *Masālik al-Ḥanfa fī Walidayu-l-Mustafa*

3) *ad-Duruju-l-Munifa fī-l-'Abā'au-sh-Ṣharīfa*

4) *al-Maqām as-Sundusiyyah fī-n-Nisba-l-Muṣṭafawiyyah*

'Imām as-Suyutī says in his *tafsīr* of Verse 28 of Surat Tawba ("Oh those who believe, the polytheists are impure indeed"): "The cleanliness and purity of the parents of the Prophet ﷺ is certain as Abu Na'im says in his book *ad-Dalā'il*, on the authority of Ibn Abbās who said: 'Allāh kept transferring me from pure backbones to pure wombs'" – pure here meaning the opposite of unclean, the word Allāh ﷻ used to describe the polytheists (*mushrikīn*/المشركين).

'Imām as-Suyutī: "What is most astonishing are those who affirm that the parents of the Prophet ﷺ are in hell, based on a few ḥadīth which appear to imply that, and ignore all the other evidence which opposes it."

The Malikī scholar 'Ibnu-l-'Arabi al-Malikī, famous commentator on Sunan Tirmidhī, says: "And there is no worse harm than to claim that the parents of the Prophet ﷺ are destined for hell."

'Imām Suhayli says in his book *ar-Rawd al-'Anif*: "We do not have the right to claim that the parents of the Prophet ﷺ are in hell."

Ḥafīḍh Ibn Hajar says: "Our opinion of the family of the Prophet ﷺ who died before the message, is that they will obey Allāh ﷻ when he tests them and eventually enter the Paradise."

The former Mufti of Egypt, 'Imām Muḥammad Bikhīt Al-Muta'āi, says in his book *al-Fatawa al-Islāmiyyah*: "There is no doubt that the parents of the Prophet ﷺ died upon 'Imān." He also goes on to say: "Those who claimed that the parents of the Prophet ﷺ died upon *kufr*, have made a serious mistake, and have fallen into sin for claiming this because they can definitely be considered as people who have harmed the Prophet ﷺ, although they do not commit *kufr* by saying so; because it is not necessarily known of the religion."

'Imām Bayjurī says in his commentary on "*Jawharat at-Tawhīd*": "The parents of the Prophet ﷺ are definitely saved and in reality, all his fathers and mothers are saved and are upon 'Imān. (belief/إيمان)"

In any case, returning to °Abd Allāh ibn °Abd al-Muṭṭalib ﷺ, it was said that a light shone out of his forehead and that this light was the promise of a Prophet as offspring. Countless woman of Arabia approached °Abd Allāh ﷺ, who, according to several traditions, was a very handsome man, so that they might gain the honor of producing his children.

Importantly, this light was believed to be transferred to °Āminah through °Abd Allāh ﷺ.

Soon after their marriage °Abd Allāh ﷺ had to travel on business to ash-Shām (present day Syria, Palestine and Lebanon) as part of caravan. When he left, °Āminah ﷺ was pregnant. However, °Abd Allāh ﷺ became sick and died from an illness before returning to Makkāh. This resulted in °Āminah ﷺ being deeply depressed, a state from which she never recovered.

Two months after the death of °Abd Allāh ﷺ, in 570 AD, known as the Year of the Elephant, Muḥammad ﷺ was born. As was tradition among all the great families at the time, °Āminah ﷺ sent Muḥammad ﷺ into the desert as a baby soon after he was born.

The belief was that in the desert, one would learn self-discipline, nobility, and freedom. This also gave Muḥammad ﷺ the chance to learn pure Arabic and Arab traditions. During this time, Muḥammad ﷺ was nursed by Ḥalimah bint Abi Dhūayb, a poor Bedouin woman from the tribe of Banu Sa°ad, a branch of the Hawāzin, who would be with him during his time in the desert and who is often referred to as his second mother.

Ḥalimah as-Sa°diyyah (حليمة السعدية) ﷺ, as she was known, was his foster-mother and wetnurse. Ḥalimah ﷺ and her husband were from the tribe of Sa°d b. Bakr, a subdivision of Hawazin (a large North Arabian tribe or group of tribes). Many stories are told that after they took the Prophet ﷺ in the whole family greatly prospered.

Ḥalimah ﷺ took him ﷺ just 8 days after he was born. He grew up in Hudaybiyah, then in Yathrib (later to be Madīnah), before returning to his mother just after he was two. °Āminah ﷺ then asked Ḥalimah ﷺ to keep Muḥammad ﷺ for some more time to strengthen him.

Years after the mother of the Prophet ﷺ had died and he had married Khadijah ﷺ, Ḥalimah ﷺ came to him complaining of her poverty. He asked Khadijah ﷺ to give her 40 sheep. After the Prophet ﷺ received his first revelation, Ḥalimah ﷺ and her husband came to the Prophet ﷺ and embraced °Islām. When she came to the Prophet ﷺ he took off his robe and put it on the ground for her to sit.

After 3 years when Muḥammad ﷺ was 6 years old, ʿĀminah ﷺ took him to Yathrib (Madinah) to meet his extended family and introduce him to the city. They ended up spending one month there. However, after having traveled only 23 miles from Yathrib towards Makkah accompanied by her husband's (ʿAbdullāh ﷺ) slave Umm ʿAymān al Barakah ﷺ, ʿĀminah ﷺ fell ill and eventually died and was buried in the village of Abwa' in 577 AD .



The remains of the grave of ʿĀminah bint Wahb; (أمنة بنت وهب) ﷺ destroyed by the Saʿudis who bulldozed it and burnt it with gasoline in 1988.



The womb of ʿĀminah ﷺ was certainly the noblest and the most honorable of all wombs because it was the womb that carried the seal of all the Prophets ﷺ and the leader of the Messengers. ﷺ It was in this womb that the noble fetus settled. This seed had been passed down from the loins of men, generation after generation until Allāh ﷻ in His Divine wisdom decreed that it moved into 'Abdullah ﷺ. ʿĀminah ﷺ was traumatized by the death of her beloved, who had only lived with her for a few months after their marriage. She wept bitterly, as her fetus had already become an orphan before it had even been born. But she pushed herself to stay strong and persevere. She found consolation in ʿAbdu-l-Muṭṭalib ﷺ, who took good care of her and showed her much compassion. Her pregnancy was surprisingly very comfortable and easy.

In a dream one night someone came to her as she was sleeping and said to her,

“You are pregnant with the Leader and the Prophet of this °Ummah (Nation, Community or People).”

He returned to her again, just before she was to give birth, and said, “Say after you deliver him, ‘I seek protection for him with the One (Allāh ﷻ) from the evil of every jealous person.’ Then name him ‘Muḥammad’.”

In this way °Āminah ﷺ continued to see dreams. More than once her dreams give her glad tidings, strengthened her, encouraged her to be patient, consoled her and indicated the greatness of the child to be born to her.

The delivery day was a great day. It was a dawn which was to remove the darkness of deviation from mankind. The Prophet ﷺ was born in spring ... after cold winds, the thunders of winter and after the darkness of its clouds.

°Āminah ﷺ said, “When I delivered him, a light came out with him that illuminated all that was between the East and the West. The light illuminated the palaces and markets of aṣḥ-Shām until I saw the necks of the camels in Baṣra. I saw three flags erected: one at the East, one at the West and the third over the Ka‘bah (الكعبة).”

°Abdu-l-Muṭṭalib ﷺ, his grandfather, came and took the boy to the Ka‘bah and whilst circumambulating it he said,

“Praise be to Allāh Who gave us this important boy. I seek protection of Allāh for him.”

(Some of the above was narrated by °Āminah ﷺ to Ḥalimah ﷺ.)



When I began this talk I mentioned “The *Mothers* of Muḥammad ﷺ” Surely a man, even a Prophet ﷺ, has only one mother.

But Muḥammad ﷺ was blessed by four women whom he recongnized as his mother.

The first, obviously, was °Āminah ﷺ and the second was Ḥalimah ﷺ who, as his wet nurse, occupied a position which is legally recognized in °Islāmic law known as the milk mother.

The third was Barakah (بركة) ﷺ, an Ethiopian (Ḥabashī/حبشي) slave girl who initially served the father of the Prophet ﷺ. After his father °Abdullāh’s ﷺ death she would serve Muḥammad ﷺ, until he freed her upon his marrying Khadījah bint Khuwaylid (خديجة بنت خويلد) ﷺ.

After this she married a man from Banu Khazraj named Ubayd ibn Zayd. This marriage produced a son named Ayman, hence her name °Umm Ayman (i.e. mother of Ayman). After his death, she then married Zayd ibn Harithah. Her second marriage produced a son named Usama ibn Zayd. She died during the rule of °Uthmān ؓ.

°Umm Ayman was with the Prophet ﷺ from his birth until his death and he used to refer to her as “my mother” (°ummī/أمي).

The noble Prophet ﷺ esteemed Barakah or Umm Ayman (أم أيمن) (as she was also known) very highly. She was the first person to hold him in her arms when he was born and the only person who knew him from that point until his death. She was one of the few Muslims whom the Prophet ﷺ assured of a place in Paradise.

“Be a mother to him, Barakah. And don't ever leave him,” °Āminah ؓ instructed her about her son as she lay dying.

Barakah did not fail in her responsibility.

Her beginnings were more than humble. In her youth, the Ḥabashī girl was put up for sale in Makkah as a slave. In pre-Islamic Arabia, slavery was not a shame but rather a fact of life and slaves were treated as members of the family for the most part.

Barakah was blessed to be treated with more than usual kindness.

She was bought by a noble and gentle man: °Abdullāh ؓ, the son of °Abdu-l-Muṭṭalib, the father of the Prophet ﷺ.

Barakah ؓ not only took care of the affairs of °Abdullāh ؓ as a servant in his home, but after he married the mother of the Prophet ﷺ, she looked after °Āminah ؓ as well.

It was Barakah ؓ who slept at the foot of the bed of °Āminah ؓ and comforted her when, only two weeks after her wedding, her husband was instructed to leave for that journey to ash-Shām, from which he never came back. It was Barakah ؓ who took care of °Āminah ؓ during her pregnancy and it was also Barakah ؓ who was the first to give °Āminah ؓ the news of the death of °Abdullāh ؓ at Yathrib.

As the Prophet ﷺ faced loss upon loss, Barakah ؓ was always there for him. From the time when his mother died when he was six, to when his beloved grandfather °Abdu-l-Muṭṭalib died when he was eight, Barakah ؓ stayed with the Prophet ﷺ.

It was only after the Prophet ﷺ married Khadījah bint Khūwaylid ؓ that she was both freed and got married, and that too, was on both the Prophet ﷺ and Khadījah's ؓ insistence.

She married Ubayd ibn Zayd from the Khazraj tribe of Yathrib and they had a son named ʿĀyman, thus her name ʿUmm ʿĀyman ة.

When the Prophet ﷺ received the prophethood, Barakah ة was among the first Muslims, and like the others, bravely faced the punishments of the Quraysh for those who dared to believe in “*lā ilāha ʿilla-llāh muḥammadu-r-rasūl-ullāh*” (لا إله إلا الله محمد رسول الله).

She and Zayd ibn Hārithah (زيد بن حارثة) ة, another companion who lived in the household of Prophet ﷺ, put their lives on the line time and time again to find out about the plots and conspiracies of the pagan Makkans against the Prophet ﷺ and the Muslims.

During the Battle of ʿUḥud (غزوة أحد), she gave out water to the thirsty soldiers and took care of the wounded. She also accompanied the Prophet ﷺ on some military expeditions.

She tied her well-being to that of ʿIslām. During a visit from the Prophet ﷺ, he asked: “Yā ʿUmmī! Are you well?” and she would reply: “I am well, O Messenger of Allāh so long as ʿIslām is.”

When the husband of ʿUmm ʿĀyman ة died not very long after their marriage she was in about her 50s. The Prophet ﷺ, said to his companions ة, “Should one of you desire to marry a woman from the people of Paradise, let him marry ʿUmm ʿĀyman ة.”

It was Zayd ibn Hārithah ة, the adopted son of the Prophet ﷺ who stepped forward and agreed to marry her. In time they had a son named ʿUsāmah ة who was described as “the beloved son of the beloved” since the Prophet ﷺ loved both the father and the son.

One example of the dedication of ʿUmm ʿĀyman ة to ʿIslām and the Prophet ﷺ was when she trekked across the burning desert through sandstorms on foot from Makkah to Madinah to join the him ﷺ. Despite the harshness of the journey, she persisted, and was given good news when she reached her destination when with, swollen feet, dust-covered face and all, the Prophet ﷺ said to her;

“Yā ʿUmm ʿĀyman! Yā ʿUmmī! Oh my mother, indeed for you there is a place in Paradise!”

She ة became a widow again, after Zayd ة was killed during the Battle of Muʿtah (غزوة مؤتة) in ash-Shām. She also lived to see the martyrdom of her son ʿUsāmah ة at the Battle of Ḥunayn (غزوة حنين).

ʿUmm ʿĀyman ة lived to see her other “son”, the Prophet ﷺ, die as well. But it was not for him she cried. When asked, she said, “By Allāh, I knew that the Prophet ﷺ would die but I cry now because the revelation from on high has come to an end for us all.”

Even after the death of the Prophet ﷺ, °Abu Bakr ؓ and °Umar ؓ continued to visit her, always inquiring if she needed any help. What honor must this woman have felt when these two visited her in her home, inquiring after her? She was certainly honored because of her close relationship to the Prophet ﷺ. There was nothing else in her background to merit any such treatment. She was a black Ethiopian slave woman in a hard society that attached much importance to class. It was °Islām that removed such restrictions and valued everyone according to his or her own actions and merits.

Barakah ؓ was aware of her position with the Prophet ﷺ and enjoyed it. She talked to him in a way that removed all barriers. Once he ﷺ was pouring water from a container to drink. She said to him: "Give me a drink." °Ā'ishah ؓ (عائشة) was amazed at her forwardness and said to her: "Is this the way you talk to the Prophet ﷺ?" Barakah ؓ said: "I have served him much longer than you." The Prophet ﷺ smiled, poured her some water and gave it to her to drink. He then looked at his wife and said: "She is right."

This sort of humility and humanity was a consistent trait of the Prophet ﷺ. One day when he was in Makkah, some slaves were brought in. When an Arabian tribe attacked another and captured some of their men, such captives were always sold as slaves. The Prophet ﷺ looked at those slaves and saw among them a young man looking broken hearted. He bought him and set him free. The young man, named Ṭhawbān, felt grateful to this person who had been so kind to him, so he preferred to stay with him rather than go back to his people in Yemen. He loved the Prophet ﷺ so much that he could not stay long without seeing him.

One day, the Prophet ﷺ looked at him and said: "What has changed your color? You look ill." He said: "No, Messenger of Allah! I am not ill, and nothing is troubling me physically. However, when I do not see you, I feel badly, until I meet you again. Also, when I think of the Day of Judgment I fear that I would not see you there, because you will be in the highest position with all the prophets. My position will be far removed from you. And if I do not go to the Garden, I would never see you." The Prophet ﷺ felt tenderly for him. Soon afterward he received revelations that included the verse that says: "All who obey Allāh and the Messenger shall be among those upon whom Allāh has bestowed His blessings: the prophets, and those who never deviate from the truth, and the martyrs and the righteous ones. How goodly a company are these!" (4: 69)



We have briefly touched on the birth mother ʿĀminah bint Wabb, the milk mother and nurse Ḥalimah bint Abi Dhūayb, and the slave and free woman who cared for the Prophet ﷺ all of his life, Barakah ʿUmm ʿĀyman but there is still another woman the he considered his mother, both in the *dhāhir* and the *bātin*, and for those who are not familiar with his a life story this may be the strangest of all.

Abu-Faraj al-Isfahani in his *ʿIsnad* narrated from ʿImām Sadiq عليه السلام¹ from his father: “Verily, Fāṭimah (فاطمة) was surnamed ʿUmmi ʿAbihā’ (أم أبيها)” (*Biharu-l-Anwār*, vol 43 p.19]. Indeed ʿUmmi ʿAbihā’ or ‘the mother of her father’, (*ʿUmmu-l-ʿAʿimmah*), is one of the best known titles of Fāṭimah. This title sounds strange for people, especially those who are less familiar with Arabic language.

Fāṭimah was, of course, the daughter of the Prophet ﷺ, the wife of ʿImām ʿAlī, the mother of the Masters of the Youth of Paradise – *sādatu-shabāb* ʾahili-j-jannah (سادة شباب أهل الجنة), al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn.

She was the crystallization of piety and chastity and a real devotee of Allāh. Her virtues are so numerous that the Prophet ﷺ said about her: “If beauty were a person it would be Fāṭimah, Nay! She is greater. Indeed Fāṭimah is my daughter and the best of the people of the earth in her origin, dignity and honour.” Fāṭimah had but a short life in this world and as her husband ʿAlī said, “She joined her father very soon.” Yet, her life was rich with abundant blessings, so much so that she became *al-Kawthar* (الكوثر) — the fountain of Prophetic blessings.

The term *mother* referred to in Arabic, as we have mentioned, is ‘ʿUmm’ whether a direct biological mother or indirect. Hence we can say Eve, or more correctly, Ḥawā’ (حواء), is also our ‘mother’. Linguistically, the term ‘mother’ is quite similar in all different languages. ʿUmm in Arabic, *mum* or *mom* in English, *mahdar* in Farsi, *ma* in Urdu and *mama* in Italian. The term ʿUmm in Arabic is defined by the Arabic linguist al-Raghib as being “Everything and everyone who is the source of the existence of something or its rearing or reforming.”

1. For those who may think we are entering into the realm of Shiʿi polemic, I remind the reader that ʿImām Jaʿfar Sadiq, besides being a teacher of Abū Ḥanīfa – founder of the Sunnī Ḥanafī school, and Malik ibn Anas – founder of the the Sunnī Maliki school (madhhab) – was, beside being a direct descendent of ʿImām Alī, was also the direct descendent on his mother’s side of Umm Farwah (the great grand-daughter of ʿĀbu-Bakr).

Therefore, anything that is the origin or the source of something, or has a fundamental role in its existence, is called ^{Umm} in Arabic. For instance, in Sūratu-z-Zukhruf 43:4 the Qur^{ān} is referred to as the Mother of the Book, “And indeed it is in the Mother of the Book with Us exalted and full of wisdom.” The term ‘the Mother of the Book’ in the ^{āyāh} is meant for *al-Lūwḥa-l-Mahfūdḥ* (اللوحة المحفوظة) which is the source of all the divine knowledge and its producer. The first Surah of the Qur^{ān} is also called ^{Ummu-l-Kitāb} (أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ), ‘the mother of the book’, for its seven ^{āyāt} contain the summary of the entire teachings of the Qur^{ān} and hence are the root and the origin of the rest of the Qur^{ān}. The ^{Ummah} in Arabic is a community which has a common religious and spiritual goal. In short, ^{Umm} is either a biological mother who is physically manifest or a spiritual mother which is a title given due to some spiritual privileges and characteristics and carries similar parental rights.

There are different chronologies but according to one commonly accepted version when Fāṭimah ؓ was five years old, she heard that her father ﷺ had become the Messenger of Allāh who had as his first task to convey the good news of Islām to his family and close relations that they were to worship only Allāh ﷻ. From this time on, she became more closely attached to her father. Often she would be at his side walking through the narrow streets and alleys of Makkah, visiting the Ka^{bah} or attending secret gatherings in Dār al-^{Arqam} (دار الأرقم) of the early Muslims who had accepted ^{Islām} and pledged allegiance to the Prophet ﷺ.

One day, when she was not yet ten, she accompanied her father to the Ka^{bah} to pray. A group of Quraysh thugs gathered around him ﷺ and asked each other which one of them would bring the entrails of a slaughtered animal and throw them on him ﷺ. One of them, taking up the dare, carried out this vile act against the Prophet ﷺ whilst he was prostrating. Imagine the feelings of Fāṭimah ؓ when she saw her father being treated in this fashion. She went up to her father and removed the entrails and stood firm facing down the thugs. In the seventh year of his mission, the Prophet ﷺ and his family were forced to leave their homes and seek refuge in a valley on the outskirts of Makkah where they were forced to retire with very limited supplies of food. Fāṭimah ؓ was just about twelve years old and had to undergo months of hardship and suffering.

The boycott lasted for three years after which the Prophet ﷺ had to face even more trials and difficulties in the Year of Sorrow (عام الحزن) when his uncle and protector, Abu Ṭālib ؓ and his beloved wife Khadijah ؓ died one after the other.

Fāṭimah ؓ, now a young lady, was greatly distressed by her mother's death and realized she had a greater responsibility of giving even more support to her father with loving tenderness. She came to be called "Umm ʿAbihā (أم أبيها) the mother of her father". On one occasion the Prophet ﷺ returned home covered in dust and earth that an other insolent mob had thrown on him. As he entered home Fāṭimah ؓ wept as she wiped the dirt from her father's head.

The Prophet ﷺ had a special love for Fāṭimah ؓ. He once said: "Whoever pleased Fāṭimah has indeed pleased Allāh and whoever has caused her to be angry has indeed angered Allāh. Fāṭimah is a part of me. Whatever pleases her pleases me and whatever angers her angers me." He also said: "From among the women in the world who have reached perfection and who are worthy of following are Maryam ؑ, daughter of ʿImrān, Khadijah, Mother of the Believers ؓ, Fāṭimah, ؓ daughter of the Prophet ﷺ and Āsiyā ؑ, wife of Firawn." Fāṭimah ؓ had a strong resemblance to her father. ʿAʿishah ؓ, the wife of the Prophet ﷺ, said of her: "I have not seen any one of the creation of Allāh resemble the Messenger more in speech, conversation and manner of sitting than Fāṭimah, may Allāh be pleased with her. When the Prophet, saw her approaching, he would welcome her, stand up and kiss her, take her by the hand and sit her down in the place where he was sitting. She would do the same when the Prophet, came to her. She would stand up and welcome him with joy and kiss him."

Fāṭimah's ؓ fine manners and gentle speech were part of her lovely and enduring personality. She was especially kind to the poor and would often give all the food she had to those in need even if she herself remained hungry. She had no craving for the ornaments of this world or the comforts and luxuries of life. She had the ability and the sincerity to stir the emotions, move people to tears and fill their hearts with praise and gratitude to Allāh ﷻ.

She was truly both the beloved daughter of her father ﷺ and, at the same time, spiritually and mystically the "mother of her father" – Umm ʿAbihā".

The birth of her first son, Sayyidinā-l-Ḥasan ؓ, also brought about a new interpretation (تأويل *tāwīl*) of Sūrah al-Kawthar and the connection of the first ʾāyah to Fāṭimah ؓ as the stream from which the Ahlu-l-Bayt flowed and continue to flow, without stint and without let, from the Spring of Kawthar into this world.

إِنَّا أَعْطَيْنَاكَ الْكَوْثَرَ

°innā °a°taynāka-l-kawthar

Truly We have given you the Font of Great Abundance

(Sūrah al-Kawthar 108:1)

Following the death of his infant son Taher in Makkah the Prophet ﷺ was given the nickname of *al-°abtar* (الْأَبْتَرُ); which means one who is “cut off” meaning one who has no male children, since earlier two of the sons of the Prophet ﷺ, Qasim and °Abdullāh had died in infancy. For ignorant minds, it seemed to be the end of the line for the Prophet ﷺ so far as male offspring were concerned.

Allāh ﷻ however had a novel way of ensuring the eternity of the lineage of the Prophet ﷺ. Not through a son, but through a daughter, which had the added value in terms of removing from this world forever the stigma that was attached to the birth of a girl child.

Fāṭimah ؑ in the Qur°ān is referred to in the °ayāt of Nūr, “Allāh is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The metaphor of His Light is that of a niche in which is a lamp, the lamp inside a glass, the glass like a brilliant star, lit from a blessed tree, an olive, neither of the east nor of the west, its oil all but giving off light even if no fire touches it. Light upon Light. Allāh guides to His Light whoever He wills and Allāh makes metaphors for mankind and Allāh has knowledge of all things.” (Sūratu-n-Nūr 25:35]. In tafsīr by Ibn al Maghazlī ash-Shāfi°ī it is related that “the niche means Fāṭimah ؑ, the lamp means al-Ḥasan ؑ and al-Ḥusayn ؑ...and ‘Light upon Light’ refers to all of them who have in turn sprung from her ؑ womb.”

At the time of the Farewell Ḥajj (*ḥujjatu-l-wā°da*) the Prophet ﷺ said: “It is probable that I will be called soon, and I will respond. So I leave behind me two weighty things: the Book of Allah which is a rope stretched from the heaven to the earth; and my offspring. Truly Allāh, the Merciful, the Aware, has informed me that these two will never be separated from each other until they meet me at the Fountain of Abundance — at the Spring of Kawthar. Therefore, be careful how you treat these two in my absence.”²

As we have seen, five years after the proclamation of the divine mission, the Prophet ﷺ and Khadijah ؑ were blessed with that spring of perpetual abundance (*kawthar*) in the form of Fāṭimah az-Zahra ؑ.

2. This ḥadīth has been narrated by more than twenty companions of the Prophet ﷺ and is mentioned in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, 2:238; *Muṣnad* Ahmad ibn Hanbal, 5:181-182; Ṣaḥīḥ Tirmidhī, 2:220.

In an age when prejudiced minds of men prided themselves on male offspring and regarded the birth of a daughter as a shame, the Prophet ﷺ rejoiced at her birth. Those were the days when women were denied rights and inheritance, not just by the Arabs of that time, but in most societies – then and now. So strong was male chauvinism that only male offspring were counted as legal descendants and children of a daughter were not regarded as legal progeny.

But ʾIslām put an end to all those sordid practices and gave women their natural place in society. To serve as a practical paradigm for women of all ages, Allāh ﷻ singled out Fāṭimah ؑ, and decreed that the sons of His beloved Prophet ﷺ would all die in infancy.

Therefore, like her father, Fāṭimah ؑ had a mission to perform. She was goodness personified. If the Prophet ﷺ was the best exemplar for the human race, as Allāh ﷻ calls him in Qurʾān, she was to be the ideal of womanhood. It was Fāṭimah ؑ as a caring daughter, a faithful wife, a loving mother, and a concerned teacher for the growing community of Muslim women and men who continues to serve as the perfect example for believing women throughout time.

As we said the Prophet ﷺ used to stand up when Fāṭimah ؑ would enter his presence. It was not the mere doting of a father for his beloved daughter, as some may misconstrue. In fact, the Messenger ﷺ was giving a practical display of the commands of the Creator, to show to the world the lofty status of Fāṭimah ؑ. Fāṭimah ؑ for her part had earned this respect through her selfless struggle and sacrifices for ʾIslām as well as her love and care for her father ﷺ.

At every stage of her life, she gave lessons in the rights and duties of women in society. She was hardly nine when her mother, the noble Khadijah ؑ, died. Fāṭimah ؑ took upon herself the burden of caring for her father in those days of persecution in Makkah. Her care and concern of her father earned the child Fāṭimah ؑ the epithet of *Umm Abihā* (mother of her father) but this is only a sentimental way of understanding that title, for in Truth (*ḥaqqīqah*/حَقِيقَة), from the beginning, before ʾĀdam was between clay and water and her father was already the Prophet ﷺ, she was precisely the mother of her father, which has nothing to do with sentimentality but points to her status as the mediatrix of gnostic reality.

The station of Fāṭimah az-Zahra ؑ is at the confluence, the juncture of *nubuwa* (النَّبوة) or the faculty of revelation and *walaya* (ولاية) or guardianship and spiritual mastery which is the intimate connection with the source of ongoing spiritual authority into the very present.

To repeat, the station of Fāṭimah ؑ as the confluence and juncture of *nubuwa* (revelation) and *walaya* (spiritual mastery) is the intimate connection with the source of ongoing authority. So when you look deeply into this, while it appears on the surface that most of us trace our lineage back to °Ali ؑ, in reality, and at a far deeper level, we the people of the way trace our lineage back to Fāṭimah ؑ – the bridge and the barzakh between the two. The mother of her father ؑ and the wife of his true manifest walī ؑ from the time of Ghādir al-Khumm (غدير الخم)³ and our *mawla* in Truth, °Alī ؑ.

For as much as the Prophet Mūhammad ؐ terminated the cycle of prophecy (*nubūwa*/نبوة) he also opened the cycle of initiation (*walāyah*/ولاية) or spiritual authority and true friendship which is the secret hidden dimension behind all of what is called Ṣūfism.

One might say it is the pure sophic dimension of Ṣūfism and metaphysically authentic in a way that those orders who profess to look back to Maryam ؑ as the source for their sophic reality can never be. In essence we are Fāṭimiyyūn and our sophiology, which is to say, our wisdom teachings, derive in essence and substance from the very being of Fāṭimah az-Zahra ؑ who is Majmū°u-n-Nūrayn.

And just so does the authority of the *qutb*, (axis and pole) and the *ghawth*, (our helper) surrounded by the three *nuqabā°* (watchmen), the four °*awtad*, (stakes), the seven °*abrar*, (pious), the forty *abdāl* (substitutes), the three hundred °*akhyar*, (chosen), and the four thousand hidden saints – all in the end derive their position and station from her and all – *all* – in the end are informed through her sapiential wisdom.

So, again, I stress if you look deeply into this while it appears on one level that most of us who are involved in the spiritual reality of °Islām trace our lineage back to °Ali ؑ in reality, and truth at a far deeper level, we actually trace our lineage back to Fāṭimah ؑ who is the bridge and the barzakh between the two.

إِنَّا أَعْطَيْنَاكَ الْكَوْثَرَ

°innāā °a°ṭaynaka-l-kawthar

Truly We have given you the Font of Great Abundance

(Sūrah al-Kawthar 108:1)

3. 110 companions ؓ of the Prophet ؐ and 84 tābi°in ؓ have narrated the hadīth of Ghadir al-Khumm. when the Prophet ؐ stated that to whomsoever he was the *mawla*, °Alī ؑ was to be their *mawla* as well.

This divine bestowal was granted to the Prophet ﷺ at the highest point of this universe, as indicated in this verse:

عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَى • عِنْدَهَا جَنَّةُ الْمَأْوَى •
إِذْ يَغْشَى السِّدْرَةَ مَا يَغْشَى • مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَى

°inḍa sidrati-l-muntaha • °indahā jannatu-l-ma°wa •

°idh yaghshā-s-sidrata mā yaghshā • mā zagħa-l-basarū wa ma tagħa

By the Tree beyond which none may pass near the Garden of Refuge

When that which covers – covered that Tree.

The eye did not turn aside, nor did it waver,

(Sūratu-n-Najm 53:14-16)

Let us hear the words of the Prophet ﷺ in another time frame at the time of his Ascension (*laylatu-l-mir°āj* ليلة المعراج), when he describes how Fāṭimah ؑ was gifted to him: “When I experienced my Ascension to the heavens, Jibr°il ؑ took my hands and showed me the Garden and before I entered the garden gave me some dates which I ate. That food turned into a drop of sperm in my loins. So when I descended to earth and united with Kḥadijah ؑ, she became pregnant with Fāṭimah ؑ. Whenever I yearned for the scent of Paradise, I smelled the fragrance of my daughter Fāṭimah ؑ.”

This extraordinary event urges us to reflect on this unique virtue of Sayyidah Fāṭimah ؑ, the only human being whose origin was created from the light of the best of creations – Muḥammad ﷺ – which was mixed with the fruit of Paradise from the holiest of places beyond which not even Archangel Jibril ؑ is permitted to cross!

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ سَعَدُوا فِي الْجَنَّةِ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا
مَا دَامَتِ السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ
إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ رَبُّكَ عَطَاءٌ غَيْرُ مَحْذُورٍ

wa °amma-l-ladhīna su°idū fa-fil-l-jannati kḥalidīna fīha
mā dāmati -s-samāwātu wa-l-°ardu

°illa ma shā°a rabbuka — °aṭān għayra majdhūdḥ

Those who have found happiness will be in the Garden,

living there so long as Heaven and Earth may endure,

– except for whatever your Lord may wish –

as a gift that will endure and never end.

(Sūrah Hūd 11:108)

This is the promise of a plentitude (*kawthar*) that is without end and without limit. However the Donor always grants His ﷺ gifts in accord with the capacity and aptitude of the receiver. When He says He has bestowed the abundance the receiver must be qualified to receive it and this dispensation, as Allāh ﷻ makes clear, flows out from and is the direct consequence of taking to heart the words:

فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَانْحَرْ

faṣalli li-rabbika wa-n-ḥar
so worship your Lord and make sacrifice.
(Sūrah al-Kawthar 108:2)



It was not long after the Prophet ﷺ passed away. Fatimah ؑ was grief stricken and she would often be seen weeping profusely. One of the companions noted he never saw Fāṭimah ؑ laugh after the death of her father, the Prophet ﷺ.

One morning, early in the month of Ramaḍān, less then five months after her noble father ﷺ had died, Fāṭimah the Radiant ؑ woke looking unusually happy and full of smiles. In the afternoon of that day, she called Salmah Bint Umays ؑ who was looking after her. She asked for some water and took a bath. She then put on new clothes and perfumed herself. She then asked Salmah to put her bed in the courtyard of the house. With her face looking up at the pure blue heavens above, she asked for her husband, °Alī ؑ. He was taken aback when he saw her lying in the middle of the courtyard and asked her what was wrong. She smiled and said:

“I have an appointment today with the Messenger of Allāh”.

°Alī ؑ cried and she tried to console him. She told him to look after their sons al-Ḥasan ؑ and al-Ḥusayn ؑ and asked that she should be buried at night, simply and without ceremony.

Then she ؑ turned and faced the Qiblah, closed her eyes, and slept. It was a sleep from which she did not awake. She was twenty-nine years old. Besides Ali ؑ and his two sons ؑ, very few others such as °Ammār, Salmān, Miqdād and Abu Dharr ؑ attended her funeral. May we all share in the plenitude of al-Kawthar

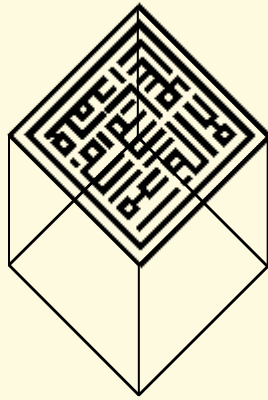


wa-llāhu°alim

☆ اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّىْ اَسْئَلُكَ بِاَنَّكَ تَعْلَمُ الْغُيُوْبَ ☆



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